



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY

Policies for Master Studies

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Disclaimer:

These policies are subject to compliance with Bremer Higher Education Act (Bremisches Hochschulgesetz - BremHG). Changes to these policies are possible under the provision of 1.2 "Changing these Policies".

I. General Terms

I.1 Scope of these Policies

These policies are the general examination regulations (Rahmenprüfungsordnung). They apply to all study programs leading to a Master of Science or Master of Arts degree. In addition to these general policies, all Master programs have individual program-specific regulations. The program-specific examination regulations are included in each study program handbook. Every Master program has a study program handbook for each of its cohorts.

In cases of conflict, the general Policies for Master Studies apply. Exceptions are possible for joint programs offered in cooperation with partner institutions.

I.2 Changing these Policies

The Academic Senate decides upon changes of the Policies for Master Studies.

I.3 Qualification Aims

In the Master program, students deepen and expand the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the Bachelor program. Graduates

- can work independently according to scientific principles, and apply current scientific knowledge and methods. This includes the ability (1) to identify relevant problems scientifically, (2) to reflect on them in their different contexts, (3) to comprehend scientific interdependencies in broad (or multidisciplinary) contexts and (4) to assess them in depth.
- have gained advanced occupational skills in order to enter/re-enter the labor market and/or to continue their education in postgraduate programs.
- are skilled to actively engage in society and to address societal, political, and economic challenges on a local, national, and global level.
- confidently use scientific language to clearly and precisely communicate their conclusions, knowledge and principles that underlie them, both to experts and laymen.

I.4 Standard Study Period and Graduation Requirements

Jacobs University offers academic Master programs and executive (i.e., professional) Master programs. Master programs consist of a predefined set of modules. Upon successful completion of a Master program (i.e., after meeting all necessary graduation

requirements), students are awarded a Master of Arts (M.A.) or a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree. A student may complete the requirements for a Master program at any time during the academic year.

The regular study period for the Master degree is four semesters (Fachsemester) with a total of 120 ECTS credit points, unless a different standard study period is defined in the program handbook of the study program. The list of Master programs offered by Jacobs University and the degrees awarded is published on the university website.

I.5 Definitions

1.5.1 Study Program Chair (SPC)

An SPC is assigned to each Master program. The SPC is responsible for the academic coordination of the study program as well as for the module description to be accurate and current. The SPC is by default module coordinator and can delegate this responsibility to another faculty member.

1.5.2 Module Coordinator

The Module Coordinator supervises a module and is responsible for its content and conduct. For modules consisting of only one module component, the module coordinator also carries out the role of Instructor of Record (IoR). If the Module Coordinator is an external lecturer with time constraints or other limitations of capacity, the SPC can serve as Module coordinator or delegate the responsibility to another faculty member.

1.5.3 Instructor of Record (IoR)

The Instructor of Record teaches the module or module component and is responsible for developing its content (syllabus), assignments, and grades. As a rule, the IoR holds a doctorate degree in a module-relevant field. Sufficient practical experience in the respective industry preferably on an executive level can substitute a PhD if approved by the Dean.

1.5.4 Academic Advisor

Upon enrollment, every student is assigned to a faculty member for academic advising. Students may change their Academic Advisor.

1.5.5 Academic Terms

At Jacobs University, the academic year is divided into a fall semester including a separate January intersession period and a spring semester. Mandatory modules can be scheduled during the intersession period. Therefore, students are expected to be present during the intersession if they have to attend mandatory modules relevant for their

studies. As a rule, classes and examinations are scheduled from Monday to Friday. However, students should be prepared to attend extraordinary Saturday sessions and examinations. Specific dates and deadlines are published in the official Academic Calendar.

I.6 Modules and ECTS Credit Points

1.6.1 Module Structure

Master programs are structured in modules. A module is a formally structured teaching unit with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Students are awarded academic credit in respect of their achievement as demonstrated through meeting the learning outcomes for a module. The number of credits assigned to a module is based on the estimated notional learning hours. Typically, 5 to 7.5 ECTS credit points are assigned to a Master module. The Master thesis, which usually covers 30 credit points, is exempt from this norm. Further exception regulations are defined in the individual program-specific handbooks.

One ECTS credit point is equivalent to 25 hours of student workload. A student earns 30 credit points per semester on average. Justified deviations are possible and specified in the respective program handbook.

Modules are characterized as mandatory, mandatory elective or elective. Module-specific details are spelled out in the individual module descriptions.

1.6.2 Module Assessment

As a rule, modules finish with a single module examination. In exceptional cases, modules may use a combinatorial assessment as long as learning objectives, methods and the assessment are constructively aligned (e.g. if a module has a practical and a theoretical component). In case of combinatorial assessment, the module grade is derived from the weighted average of the individual grades of the assessments. The module grade is recorded in the transcript.

Details of the module examination are defined in the module data sheet and in the mandatory study and examination plans of the respective study programs.

In exceptional cases, it is possible to define module achievements (“Studienleistungen”) as a pre-condition to be admitted to the module assessment. They must be defined in CampusNet and appear in the module description. In case module achievements are graded, these grades are not included in the module grade.

For modules that finish with a single module examination, the Instructor of Record may allow for bonus achievements (e.g., homework assignments), as an option for students to monitor learning objectives during the semester. Bonus achievements must be clearly

defined in the syllabus and must be communicated in advance. They can solely be used as feedback and to improve the grade of an already passed module examination by typically 0.33 and not exceeding 0.67 grade points. They may neither impair the grade nor be pass-relevant. Receiving the highest mark of 1.00 must be possible without bonus achievements.

Examination results are published in the integrated campus management system (CampusNet). Students have the right to obtain access to their examination files upon request.

I.7 Registration and Syllabi

I.7.1 Registration

Every semester, students must register for the modules relevant for their Master program. Registrar Services publishes the deadlines for registration each semester. The university reserves the right to cancel a module if less than 5 students have registered for it.

If a student is not formally registered for a module, no grades and credits can be awarded for that module, even if the student completes the work for it. If a student is formally registered for a module, the Module Coordinator must provide a result for that student at the end of the semester even if the student has not participated in the module.

Modules may have pre-requisites (previously passed modules) that must be fulfilled before registration. Additionally, they may have co-requisites (modules taken in the same semester) which require students to register in parallel to one or more associated module(s).

The Instructor of Record (IoR) may exempt students from the pre- or co-requisite requirement.

In general, students have the opportunity to change their study plan by dropping and/or adding modules during a period of two weeks after the beginning of classes. The drop/add deadline is published each semester in the Academic Calendar.

I.7.2 Module Syllabi

A syllabus must be published for each module component before the start of registration in any given semester. This contains the topic of the module sessions and specifies, if applicable, the basic literature to be consulted for these sessions. The syllabus contains specifications of the requirements, the grading details, and the learning outcomes.

II. Assessment Types

Assessment types include written exams, oral exams, term papers, project reports, laboratory reports, practical examinations, and presentations as well as poster presentations. Team projects may be applied in all examination forms other than written examinations. In such cases, the IoR must clearly indicate the method of determining credit for the participants in the team. Such a method provides that the contributions of the individual team members be clearly identifiable and therefore gradable.

II.1 Written Assessments

A written examination is a supervised, in-class assessment testing the students' competences. Each student produces answers to given questions or tasks in written form with no auxiliary resources except for those explicitly approved by the IoR. A written examination lasts between 60 and 180 minutes usually reflecting the overall workload (ECTS) of that module. In general, Instructors of Record conduct and proctor examinations. In exceptional cases Registrar Services may organize additional proctors centrally (e.g., for final exams with high numbers of participants).

A term paper is a literary analytic, speculative, or interpretative composition on a chosen or assigned theme or subject, usually in prose according to previously specified requirements. The student produces the term paper individually. Different forms of term papers include project reports and essays.

A laboratory report describes the preparation, performance, and the results of empirical research according to previously specified requirements.

A poster presentation focuses on the poster as a medium for communication. It may be augmented by oral explanation or a Q&A period with the examiner.

II.2 Oral Assessments

An oral examination is an assessment whereby the examiner poses questions to one or more students and each student produces answers in spoken form. Oral examinations require the presence of a qualified observer in addition to the examiner. The observer holds an academic degree in the field of the module question of at least one level above the current degree of the student. He/she records in writing every answer given during the examination and submits these minutes for inclusion in the student's examination file. An oral examination lasts between 15 and 45 minutes per student.

A presentation is a formal talk about a topic, theme or project. It is generally performed in front of an audience using media to support the speech and may include a discussion period.

II.3 Practical Examinations

A practical examination is an assessment of the practical skills of a student, for example in research-related modules. Practical examinations require the presence of a qualified observer in addition to the examiner. The observer holds an academic degree in the field of the module of at least one level above the current degree of the student. The observer minutes the examination and submits these minutes for inclusion in the student's examination file. A practical examination can be an individual or a group assessment and lasts between 15 and 45 minutes.

II.4 Project Assessment

A project assessment refers to the comprehensive evaluation of a coherent set of activities that all relate to a particular topic or task ("project") such as planning, progress, presentation in one or more modality, etc.

II.5 Master Thesis

In order to graduate, students have to submit a Master thesis of 30 ECTS credit points. An oral defense as part of the assessment of the thesis is possible. The thesis is written under the guidance of a Jacobs University faculty member (thesis supervisor).

The cover page of the Master thesis needs to show the title, the university's name, the month and year of submission, the name of the student, and the names of the reviewers (thesis supervisor and second reviewer).

Furthermore, the thesis needs to contain the official Jacobs University declaration on authorship signed by the student that the thesis is independent work and has not been handed in elsewhere.

The electronic version of the Master thesis must be uploaded to a plagiarism check platform defined by the university.

The Master thesis is graded by the thesis supervisor and the second reviewer. As a rule, the second reviewer must be a Jacobs University faculty member or an external expert holding a PhD degree in the respective field.

The Master thesis is graded according to the Jacobs University grading scheme that is published on the Jacobs University website. Reviewers must submit the completed "Master Thesis Evaluation" form to Registrar Services within four weeks after receiving the thesis. Reviewers agree on a single numerical grade.

If the thesis does not meet the requirements, the reviewer(s) has the possibility to grant the student the right to revise the thesis and resubmit it within three months.

Students must submit the Master thesis on or before their last day of enrollment. If they cannot complete their thesis within the last semester of enrollment, they must apply for an extension of studies (see Admission and Enrollment Policy, section 4) in order to stay enrolled.

III. Assessment Procedures

III.1 Scheduling of Written Examinations

In general, all written examinations are held at the end of the semester during the university's official final examination period as specified in the Academic Calendar. Registrar Services centrally plans the examination schedule of examinations and assigns the date, time, and room(s) for examinations to be held. Students with special needs have the right to request suitable exam arrangements. (see section V.3. Students with Special Needs) No student is required to take more than two final module examinations on any given day. Students who would have more than two examinations on a single day may ask to be officially excused from all but two examinations.

For each examination one make-up is offered. Written make-up exams are centrally scheduled by Registrar Services for students who either failed the original examination or were officially excused (see section III.4. - Excuse from Academic Obligations). A further possibility to re-sit the examination will be given during the subsequent official module examination, normally in the following year. In case a failed or missed (medical reasons) module is not offered it may be replaced by a different module (see section III.5. - Exceptional Module Replacement).

III.2 Incomplete Module Work

In exceptional cases, students may request a temporary incomplete grade for any module for which they are currently registered. This is indicated by an "I" on the initial grade report. An "I" is assigned only in cases where a student receives permission from the Instructor of Record to turn in module work after the end of the semester. The Instructor of Record may communicate a grade penalty for late submission if applicable.

An incomplete "I" will also be assigned if a student is officially excused for a grading component. In this case no grade penalty will be imposed. The modalities for completion of the module in these cases is regulated in III.4. "Excuse from Academic Obligations".

The student must fulfill the missing requirements within the given deadline for submitting incomplete module work published in the Academic Calendar, whereupon the Instructor of Record will convert the "I" to a grade.

If the missing requirement is not fulfilled by the deadline, the instructor will assign the lowest possible grade for this grading component and issue the grade for the module accordingly.

III.3 Failed Modules

For modules with one assessment type, the module is ultimately failed if the written examination required for passing the module is failed three times (first attempt plus two make-up exams). For all modules with other assessment types, the IoR or SPC may allow for a maximum of one resubmission or make-up exam.

Modules with more than one assessment component (Modulteilprüfungen) are failed if the weighted average of the percentage grades is lower than 45% (corresponding to a numerical grade of 4.67 or lower). In that case, all assessment components need to be repeated provided a repetition is possible. Modules that consist of more than one graded module component (Modulkomponentenprüfungen) are failed if one of the assessments of a module component is failed. In that case, the assessment that has been passed does not need to be repeated.

If a mandatory module is ultimately failed, the Master degree of the study program will not be granted and the student will be disenrolled.

III.4 Excuse from Academic Obligations

Students may be excused officially by Registrar Services from taking examinations or from attending mandatory class/lab sessions for the following reasons only:

Illness or personal emergency: Illness must be documented with a sick certificate issued by a qualified physician. This certificate needs to verify the date and time of the in-person visit occasioned the confirmation that the student is unable to fulfill his/her academic obligation (either attend class/lab or take the examination). The university reserves the right to request a second medical opinion. Other emergencies must be appropriately documented in writing. Sick certificates and documentation for personal emergencies must be submitted to Registrar Services by the third calendar day from the beginning of illness/of the emergency. Please note that these three days include the first day of the illness/of the emergency. If the third calendar day is a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday, the deadline is extended to the next working day. If students submit a sick certificate after the deadline, an excuse may be issued, when applicable, only for the submission date and the two calendar days preceding it. Predated or backdated sick certificates – i.e., when the visit to the physician takes place outside of the documented sickness period – will be accepted provided that the visit to the physician precedes or follows the period of illness by no more than one working day.

Excursion in a mandatory module: Excuses due to excursions in mandatory modules will be sent out by Registrar Services as early as possible after the drop/add period each semester.

Regardless of the reason for their absence, students must inform the Instructor of Record before the beginning of the examination or class/lab session that they will not be able to attend. The day after the excuse ends, students must contact the Instructor of Record.

Failure to complete a module will lead to a continued incomplete of the module until the missing requirements are fulfilled or definitively failed.

Students who go on an optional excursion or participate in events of importance to the university may ask Registrar Services to issue a recommendation for an excuse. Requests for recommendations must be made via email well in advance of the event or the class trip. The decision whether to excuse the student rests with the Instructor of Record.

III.5 Exceptional Module Replacements

In exceptional cases, e.g., if a module is no longer offered, mandatory modules or mandatory electives may be replaced by other modules. The latter have to fulfill a similar function in the curriculum and a written request about such replacement needs to be filed. The request needs to first be approved by the SPC and subsequently by the Dean.

III.6 Pass Option

Students may request, upon consultation with the Academic Advisor for the grade of one passed module (up to 7.5 ECTS) to be excluded from the calculation of the GPA and to be replaced by a 'P' (for pass) on the transcript under the following conditions and limitations:

No more than one Pass Option may be applied during the entire graduate degree program. The Pass Option may not be applied on a failed module or on the Master thesis. The Pass Option can be applied at any point before graduation, but for all internal grade-based evaluations the actual grade in the module will be considered.

Once applied, the Pass Option cannot be reverted into a grade or reassigned to a different module.

III.7 Grading

Modules and module components at Jacobs University are graded by the Instructors of Record on the basis of a percentage scheme. The percentages are converted to a numerical modules grade. The university website lists the respective grading tables.

A module is passed with a grade of 4.33 or better. ECTS credit points are awarded as soon as the module is passed.

Registrar Services calculates the cumulative grade point average (GPA). All modules in which the student received a grade (except for modules in the Further Module Area) are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA weighted by credits.

In general, the deadline for submitting final grades for the fall semester is end of January, for the spring semester end of June, or a workday close to these dates as specified in the Academic Calendar.

In addition to modules that are required for graduation students may register for further modules. Credits obtained in these modules do not count towards the credits needed for graduation and are not included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA but appear on the transcript. In case a student successfully completes more modules than required for graduation, the additional modules may be moved to the Further Modules Area.

III.8 Advanced Placement, Transfer Credits, and Non-Academic Achievements

Jacobs University awards ECTS credit points for Advanced Placement (AP), Module Transfer, and Non-Academic Achievements.

III.8.1 Advanced Placement Credits

Advanced Placement (AP) credits may be awarded for academic competences acquired outside of formal university-level module work. Advanced Placement credit is conditional on a demonstrated level of competence equivalent to a university-level module regularly offered at Jacobs University. Not all Jacobs University modules are eligible for Advanced Placement. For more details, students should contact the responsible Instructor of Record and their Study Program Chair. Faculty may request students applying for Advanced Placement to pass a formal written examination, which should generally be offered during the first two weeks of classes. If the student has already registered for a module, he/she can in principle only apply for AP credits for that particular module and withdraw from the module within the drop/add period. Once modules are taken at Jacobs University, they may not be replaced by Advanced Placement credits. Language modules are generally excluded from Advanced Placement.

AP credits recognized by Jacobs University are designated on the transcript as being

Advanced Placement modules (AP). In such a case, no grade is assigned.

III.8.2 Transfer Credits

Transfer credits may be awarded for academic module work completed at another university or institution of higher education (e.g., for transfer students or for study abroad). To apply for the recognition of transfer credits, students must submit the Transfer Credit Form, the module syllabi, and an official transcript indicating the modules taken to Registrar Services. Upon recommendation of the Faculty from the respective field of study, Registrar Services rules on the acceptance of transfer credits.

Module work completed at other institutions is eligible for transfer credits at Jacobs University if the qualification to be recognized does not differ significantly in content, intended learning outcomes, scope, academic level or quality from the modules offered at Jacobs University. A refusal to transfer credits must be reasoned by Jacobs University. Language modules in the languages taught at Jacobs University are accepted if taken at other universities or at our partner institutes. Credits acquired for languages other than those offered at Jacobs University are transferred if issued by a partner university of Jacobs University.

For module work completed prior to enrollment at Jacobs University, students must apply for recognition of transfer credit points during their first semester at Jacobs University. Students who transfer a significant number of credits may be treated as “Transfer students” and be placed into a higher semester of their study program.

For module work completed elsewhere while being enrolled at Jacobs University (i.e., during the semester breaks or study abroad), students must apply for recognition of transfer credit within one semester after the achievement.

III.8.3 Non-Academic Achievements

Non-academic competences acquired outside of the higher education system may be recognized for up to half of the credits provided for the modules offered, provided that the acquired knowledge and skills are equivalent in content and level to the modules they are intended to replace. Equivalence is given if the content, scope, and requirements essentially correspond to those of the intended study program at Jacobs University, to which the credits are to be applied. Students must apply for the recognition of Non-Academic Achievements during their first year of study.

III.8.4 Language Modules

All study programs taught in English contain mandatory German language modules. Students who meet the required German proficiency level (e.g. native-speakers) need to select modules in another language offered at Jacobs University. Program-specific regulations are defined in the respective program handbook. Students must take a

placement test before registering for the appropriate language proficiency level. They may, at their own risk, take language modules half a level higher than the one in which they have been placed according to the placement test.

III.8.5 Audit

Students may register for modules as auditors. It is at the discretion of the Instructor of Record to allow auditing of the module and specify the conditions for auditing. Audited modules are not graded and do not receive credit points, they do not fulfil any degree requirements. These modules will appear on the transcript with the indication that the module was audited.

III.8.6 Further Modules Area

In addition to module that are required for graduation students may register for further module. Credits obtained in these modules do not count towards the credits needed for graduation and are not included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA but appear on the transcript.

IV. Degree Certificates

Upon graduation and after completing the formal checkout, every student will receive the following final documents:

IV.1 Diploma

The diploma states the name and date of birth of the degree holder, the degree and program, and the date of the conferral of the degree. The diploma carries the seal of Jacobs University and is signed by the President of the university and the Dean responsible for graduate studies.

IV.2 Diploma Supplement

The diploma supplement conforms to the guidelines of the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) and provides more detailed information about the university and the specific program of study. It also includes the final GPA, the date of the conferral of the degree and, if applicable, further special achievements.

IV.3 Final transcript

The final transcript lists all modules a student has taken at Jacobs University, including the grades of the individual modules. It also lists the semester GPA for each semester of study, the cumulative GPA for the entire study, the Master thesis title and grade, the

date of the conferral of the degree, and, if applicable, further special achievements. The transcript is signed by two staff members of Registrar Services and carries the seal of the University.

V. Administrative Details

V.1 Committee on Examinations and Standing (Widerspruchsausschuss)

The Committee on Examinations and Standing is an academic body that decides on official appeals by students in matters such as academic examinations, extension of studies, re-enrollment (see Admission and Enrollment Policy), as well as other complaints regarding examinations or academic standing that could not be solved otherwise. The committee is an independent appeals board, which acts according to the policies of the university. It is a non-public body. Its decisions are binding. The committee consists of the following members with voting rights (which may be replaced by substitutes):

- one Dean for undergraduate education
- one Dean for graduate education
- one faculty member from each focus area
- one member of research and teaching staff
- one undergraduate student
- one graduate student

V.2 Graduation Ceremony

A student who wants to receive his/her diploma during graduation ceremony must submit his/her Master thesis at least four weeks before the ceremony.

A student who wants to participate in the graduation ceremony before having completed all graduation requirements does a so-called “walkthrough”. In order to be eligible for a walkthrough, the student must provide written confirmation of his/her thesis supervisor and/or the respective Instructor(s) of Record that he/she is expected to finish all graduation requirements no later than August 31 of that academic year. As a rule, the confirmation must be submitted to Registrar Services at least two weeks before the graduation ceremony.

V.3 Students with Special Needs

The rules and provisions of the “General Act on Equal Treatment” (Allgemeines

Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - AGG) apply. Students with special needs should be able to complete their studies and examinations under conditions equivalent to those of any other student. To this end, as far as possible all study- and examination-related offers are designed to be barrier-free. Students with special needs are entitled to special arrangements during their studies, during study organization and design as well as during examinations. In particular, consideration must be given to study- and examination-related effects, e.g., the need for special aid or assistance, and the provision of study and examination conditions in a form other than the intended organization. The academic requirements for study- and examinations achievements will not be affected. Students with special needs may apply for individual arrangements prior to any examination at Registrar Services using the corresponding form. If candidates can document, that they are not able to take an examination wholly or partially in the offered form because of continued or permanent illness or disability, special arrangements are provided for. These may include a prolongation of the examination duration, the assignment of an individual room or a different design of the examination. The individual requirements must be registered with Registrar Services in advance. The submission of a medical certificate and/or disabled person card may be required.

V.4 Maternity- and Parental Leave

It is possible to make use of the protection periods according to the Maternity Protection Act (MutterSchutzGesetz - MuSchG), as amended, and in accordance with time limits for the parental allowance and parental leave (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz - BEEG), as amended. When granting a leave of absence as well as calculating leave periods the provisions of § 40 BremischesHochschulgesetz concerning the period of maternity - or parental leave apply. Taking examinations during maternity- or the parental leave is possible, despite leave of absence. However, make-ups of examinations are not mandatory during the leave period.